



via pacis
(the way of peace)
Des Moines Catholic Worker
Volume 2 number 2
February/March 1978
Lenten issue

Discussions

Part of the Catholic Worker tradition is the round table discussion where people join together to verbalize and clarify thoughts. The liturgy is celebrated every Friday night at the House (713 Indiana, one block north of University). at 8 p.m. followed by a discussion.

Feb. 24 The Mobilization for Survival; Steve Marsden. Steve is a local pacifist, coordinator for the Lincoln--Chicago branch of the Concidental Walk, and active in the Iowa Mobilization. March 3: Subsistence Farming; Al and Mary Razor. The Razor's operate Orchard Terrace in rural central Iowa, where they engage in subsistence farming. March 10: The Catholic Worker and the Church; Bishop Dingman. Bishop Dingman has been following the Catholic Worker history for many years and is particularly familiar with the contributions of the Des Moines diocese's own Msgr. Ligutti to the Worker. March 17: The Des Moines Area Religious Council; Harold Varce. Dr. Varce is director of DMARC, an interdenominational association which sponsors a variety of justice related projects. March 24: Good Friday; no mass or discussion. March 31: The Battered Women's Conference; Sr. Eve Kavanagh,

RSCJ. Sr. Eve spoke of our ministry as a shelter to battered women at this recent conference. She also picked up some information on the current status of justice and this intra-family violence. April 7: Evangelization on a Mid-West Campus; Tom Cordaro. Tom is a campus minister at Iowa State University in Ames, and is active in the charismatic renewal. April 14: Tax Day, 1978; Last year the Catholic Worker and the Iowa Peace Network sponsored a leaf-letting demonstration at the post office for tax day. Plans are still in the offing for this year. More than half of our income tax dollars still go to finance past, present and future wars. April 21: The Catholic Worker Movement; staff. Once a month we set aside a discussion to clarify our own thoughts and gain new input to the Worker. May 5: The Eucharist as Bread for the Hungry; Tad Guzie, SJ. Tad, of the St. Joseph Educational Center staff, is a well published author on sacraments and the church.

via pacis is published by the Des Moines Catholic Worker Community, Box 4551, Des Moines, Iowa 50306. Tel (515) 243-0765. Community: Frank Cordaro, Joe Da Via, Jacquee Dickey, Betty Goodnough, Edson Howarth, Eve Kavanagh, RSCJ, Ed Polich, and John Zeitler. Subscriptions are free upon request.

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On Hospitality



Nathan Zobrow, OSB

by Jacquee Dickey

Since I've tried to begin this article, the phone has rung ten times, a family of six has moved out and onward to Wyoming, and a family of four is moving in, I've had to fetch a painkiller for Sam (he fell on the ice while shoveling our walk), and now Dave tells me Kathy might have to be hospitalized because the doctor thinks she's losing her baby. Looking out the window, I see a squirrel who is dancing unwaveringly along some very thin limbs

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at the top of a 40 foot tree. Looking further, I see a cat the color of vanilla ice cream in the tree too. He doesn't balance on those narrow limbs as gracefully and in fact looks quite frightened--40 feet was going a little too far to catch a stupid squirrel. The cat looks over at me with a cheshire smile and says "And you think you've got problems?"

And we think we've got problems? Lent is a good time of the year for us to reflect outside ourselves. The guests that share our house force us to do that. Yeah, I was feeling real bad the other day and was drowning my sorrows in a good cry when all of a sudden I was jolted into reality by the sound of a woman in the next room crying softly too. Here at the Worker, we share meals and we share tears. We suffer together. During Lent, we re-live the suffering of Jesus' humanity. ("He was like us in all things.") The common human experience of struggle and pain that binds us together with Christ, binds us together with our guests. Whether she knew it or not, the woman in the next room, by allowing me to hear her cry, comforted me.

STAFF

I have returned to live in Msgr. Ligutti House after a two-month getaway with my sister's family

in Pennsylvania. (By the way, they run a great Hospitality House out there!) The Staff is once again expanding. Edson Howarth is now officially a Catholic Worker (he got initiated by dressing up as a pink haired Cupid for Valentine's Day). He is working at a natural foods bakery and we're anxious to taste those culinary skills. Betty Goodnough arrived on the plane from Waco, Texas on February 16, and we're anxious to get to know her better. Two Wartburg students have expressed interest in spending the month of May with us, so we may get to our Spring cleaning after all.

We've all been busy! Eddie and I popped down to Kansas City for a weekend workshop on non-violence led by Clare Danielsson. Then a group of us went up to Dubuque to see Jim Douglass (author of The Non-Violent Cross and Contemplation and Resistance). In between substitute teaching, Frank's been trying to follow up on the Korean fetus story. Many of you wrote for more information. You might have seen the article in the Des Moines Sunday Register on February 5th, which tried to dismiss the story as a rumor. Frank found several loopholes in it and has been in contact with some officials in Washington D.C. who are working on further investigation. We'll keep you posted.

During Lent some people have been tithing for us at the Catholic Worker. Others ask what our needs are. So I'll just mention a few.

During these cold days, many

folks have come to us for groceries and our pantry is almost empty. There is a real need for emergency food aid and we can only provide this service with your help. We need to re-stock our shelves so we can continue to feed those in need.



Other needs:

1. Children's books and toys in decent condition. I washed all our stuffed animals the other day and only the raccoon, the bunny and a teddy bear survived. The rest lost arms, legs, fur, stuffing--well, lets just say they are no longer with us. Most of the other toys we have are falling apart, too. We often have up to six children at a time and it's a little hard for them in the winter to be with-

out playthings. (We also could use crayons and coloring books).

2. Blankets and bed spreads. When we have a lot of guests, we need to change bedding frequently. While we have plenty of sheets, blankets and bed spreads are in short supply.

3. Mending. Would you rather make a donation of your personal time? We could use a good seamstress to help repair some of the things that are wearing thin. In this age of consumerism where we throw away damaged merchandise we'd rather not be bothered with fixing, the worker likes to be a witness of recycling these goods. Our country unfairly uses 60 % of the world's resources and part of the reason is because we waste rather than be inconvenienced. Also, the skills of living simply are not being passed on like they once were in our early American heritage. It would be a real gift to the staff and guests if you could teach us these skills.

4. We also need plumbers. Our upstairs bathtub has given up the ghost and we need to replace it.

5. Dishtowels for the kitchen.

6. Shampoo.

7. And During Lent, remember us in your prayers.

The Bible never calls us to be 'saved' It always calls us to both an identity and a vocation.

Christians are those who are set free from self concerns to show concern for others.

--Bill Webber

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Parallels

by John Zeitler

Botanists use the term heliotropism to describe the tendency of some plants to turn toward the sun. That attraction is paralleled in the spiritual world--each of us is drawn lovingly and inexorably to the Source of our life. Experience in the world offers many parallels in the spiritual life.

It is now commonplace to admit that the material wealth of American corporations was amassed at the expense of the disenfranchised of this country and of the third world. Our standard of living is higher because it rests on the necks of the poor.

Is there a parallel in the spiritual world? Assume that suffering is inevitable and is beneficial to growth and that world-wide Christianity is one body. Is our degree of religious freedom paid for by the Vietnamese Catholics who have been religious refugees since the 1950's? Is there any relationship between our plush church buildings and the government closing of Catholic hospitals in Ethiopia? Is our high clergy-laity ratio a function of the execution of priests and sisters in South America? If any part of this is true, can our response be any less than prayerful gratitude and a vow to give our lives to justice?

A Quest for Jesus

by Frank Cordaro

In the eighteenth century, a movement was initiated which has become known as "the quest for the Historical Jesus." Basically it was a search to find a historically accurate biography of the "real" Jesus of Nazareth and, therefore, a "proof" of the validity of Christian faith.

Today, another search is taking place--the quest for the "Personality" of Jesus. Everywhere you turn, people of all persuasions are Jesus. The term "born again" is commonly understood, among Catholics as well as others, for a person who has let Jesus enter their hearts on a personal level.

Gradually it became clear to those searching for the "historical Jesus" that even the best of efforts did not bring anyone closer to the actual Jesus of history. Any study which tried to present the objective Jesus of the past ended only in showing who the particular author believed Jesus to be--for each author presents us with a different Jesus. Underlying the search for the historical Jesus was the false assumption that the authenticity of Jesus' message and person rested on the historical accuracy of his biography in the gospels. The gospels, however, are not historical or biographical docu-

ments. They are faith documents. The search for the "historical Jesus" has often proved to be a dead-end for the transmission of faith. Historically, what we know is that Jesus lived



Fritz Kichenberg

and died among us almost 2000 years ago, and his followers have left us with a kernel of his history embedded in documents which are the witness of their experience of, and faith in him.

The message and person of Jesus are more than a historical phenomenon. And we are faced with the same problem of all believers of the past--to apply that faith in the person and message of Jesus in our own historical milieu.

The quest for the "personality" of Jesus places us in the same danger as did the quest for the "historical" Jesus. Just as each age imposed its historical ideal on Jesus, we are in danger of imposing our ideal personality on Jesus. Thus we move from a "historical quest" to a "personality cult," for every "personality quest" reveals a different Jesus. Each "personal" Jesus discovered is likely to be a mirror of the personality of the searcher.

The problem of the "personality cult" Jesus is that he never challenges the searcher. The "personality cult" Jesus is very likely to produce ghettoized Christians--Christians concerned only with Christians reflecting their own particular form of piety. "Personality cult" Christians see today's Gospel setting to be literally the same as those of the first century--pagans vs. Christians. And, too often, their sole mission is the proclamation of the Lordship of Jesus through pat verbal assertions of salvation and internal personal

strokes--"Thank God, I'm O.K.!"

The "personality cult" Christian often fails to see the real life and death issues of the first century and the real life and death issues of today. The world



Ade Bethune

is no longer divided neatly into Pagans and Christians. Clichés such as "Jesus saves" no longer carry power in themselves. What is needed is enormous faith coupled with the power to live in insecurity and with ambiguity. What is needed least is pious narcissism in so-called "Christian" packages.

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of "personality cult" Christians is that they are never neutral in regard to the fundamental Gospel issues which are perennial from generation to generation. On the issues of justice and peace, of power and powerlessness and, the most central of all issues, that

of radical, active love, "personality cult" Christians all too often side with Caesar and crucify Jesus again and again. Perhaps Jimmy Carter can genuinely claim Jesus as his personal savior, but in his role as President of the U.S. he trusts in the bomb for his security. Many "personality cult" Christians lose themselves in the non-issues of overly subjective assertions of personal salvation to the detriment of the true proclamation of the universality of the Gospel. Few of them would be at ease with the real Jesus who died as a criminal--an enemy of the powerful state and comfortable religion!

Yet the quest for Jesus is a central movement for all believers. The danger lies in the many images of ourselves which we continually project onto Jesus. Each age has its limitations in its quest to find Jesus. Our age is no different. We need to find Jesus desperately--the healer, the peacemaker, the giver of life. The movement toward him is always two directional--to go inside of oneself and to go outside oneself to the other with one uncompromising principle--to be truthful. No set of dogmas or scriptural texts should be used to escape the truth which sets us free. We are who we are and we shall see who we are if only we dare to look at Jesus who is the Truth--Jesus as he is in the Gospel, and as he is broken in his sisters and brothers all around us.

Jesus is found in this dialectic.
via pacis

To experience ourselves as we are--broken and hurting--and from that experience to move toward others as peacemakers, as healers, life-bearers, and as radical, active lovers. We share with others the same brokenness and hurt but we act not in fear caused by our limitations but in faith caused by the "God-worth" we have in Christ Jesus. The quest for Jesus is no further than our movement toward others, based not on the fear of our mutual brokenness, but on the truth that together we are loved by God.

"Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:28-30)

As a great rabbi once remarked, "All the rest is merely commentary."



This, rather is the fasting that I wish
releasing those bound unjustly
untying the thongs of the yoke
Setting free the oppressed
breaking every yoke;
Sharing your bread with the hungry
sheltering the oppressed and the homeless
Clothing the naked when you see them
and not turning your back on your own.
Isaiah, Chapter 58

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lilies
by Joe DaVia

It is my goal in life
to become
a lily.

"For even Solomon
in all his splendor
was not adorned
like one of these."

If I could just let go
(with no insurance or guarantee)
and fall flat on a cloud
I really believe I might understand
Christianity
Christ-like life.

You told your friends
"You've heard it.
Now do it.
Hit the road
no packs,
no insurance,
no padding,
no food.
Just you
and the message."

They came back overwhelmed.
"Hey, this new code really works!"

I want to fall on the cloud
but on my terms ;
with a parachute
just in case.

And one of these days
I pray,
I hope,
I promise,
I can do it alone.



The less you have
of Caesars
The less you have
to render
to Caesar.

Fr. Vincent McNabb

Notice

The mailing list for via pacis now numbers close to 700, and we are seeing the need to trim the list as best we can. Please help us by filling out the enclosed card if you wish to continue receiving our newsletter. We still will offer subscriptions for free, although the cost of printing and mailing is about 12¢ a copy. We always welcome requests for new subscriptions.

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Non-Violence Workshops

The Kansas City Catholic Worker and Pax Christi Midwest are offering weekend workshops in Non-Violent Management of Assault Situations. Two workshops are still to be held:

SAFE PASSAGE ON CITY STREETS:

Further Principles of Prevention and Management of Street Violence
Dates: to be announced

Description: This weekend will focus on dealing with the fear of street violence; ways of being on the streets which do not invite assault, and de-escalating potentially violent confrontations. Methods of growth in spirit, life-style, and response patterns which produce creative responses in emergency situations will be explored. With this workshop, we will begin investigating possibilities for organizing communities around the need for non-violent crime prevention. Trainers: Dorothy and William Samuel. Both have been involved in peace and civil rights movements since 1945. Dorothy, among other credits, authored Safe Passage on City Streets. William now teaches at Friends School in Baltimore.

WOMEN AND VIOLENCE: Alternative Responses

Dates: April 7, 8, 9 1978

Description: While continuing to February/March, 1978



explore approaches of non-violence, this weekend will primarily offer alternative actions for women in situations of harassment and rape. Our emphasis will be on reducing fear and panic, and building confidence through learning new responses which de-escalate sexual violence.

Trainers: Pamela Owens and Rick Ream. Pamela is presently a seminary student at Austin Theological Seminary, Austin Texas. She has been involved in the Women's Movement since 1968 and has experience in the use of non-violence in Civil Rights organizing (North Carolina). Rick is a draft resister and counselor, and has done training for Marshals in Anti-War protests and taught courses in non-violence at the University of Texas. Currently, he is the Chaplain at the Brown School, Austin, Texas.

If you would like to attend one or both of the workshops, contact Jacquée Dickey at the House.

The First Christians
by Peter Maurin

The first Christians, were real Christians

They died for their faith

Before dying for their faith, the first Christians

fed the hungry for Christ's sake,

clothed the naked for Christ's sake,

instructed the ignorant for Christ's sake.

And because they did

all those things for Christ's sake

Their pagan contemporaries said about them:

"See how they love each other."

The first Christians

did everything for Christ's sake

and nothing for business sake.

Des Moines Catholic Worker

P.O.Box 4551

Des Moines, IA 50306

Tel. (515)243-0765

Catholic Worker House

713 Indiana

Msgr. Ligutti House of Hospitality

1301 8th Street

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